DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

COMPLETE STATEMENT
OF
COLONEL MARK E. TILLOTSON
DISTRICT ENGINEER
OMAHA DISTRICT

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON FISHERIES, WILDLIFE, AND WATER
COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS
UNITED STATES SENATE

ON

THE PROPOSED FISH HATCHERY AT FORT PECK, MONTANA

APRIL 29, 2000
GLASGOW, MONTANA

INTRODUCTION

Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee, I am Colonel Mark E. Tillotson, District Engineer, Omaha District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. With me today are Debra Brey, the Planning Assistance to States Program Manager for the Omaha District and two other Corps district individuals who were instrumental in completing this study — Ted Streckfuss and Randy Sellers. Thank you for this opportunity to present a statement on the findings of our study of a proposed fish hatchery at Fort Peck, which we conducted for the State of Montana under our Planning Assistance to States (PAS) Program, authorized by Section 22 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1974, as amended. I understand that the Administration is developing a position on S. 2027, the Fort Peck Fish Hatchery Authorization Act of 2000, that would authorize Federal construction and cost-sharing of the hatchery.

FORT PECK HATCHERY SECTION 22 STUDY

From December 1999 through March 2000, at the request of the State of Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks and local interests, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers conducted a reconnaissance-level study of and prepared a conceptual design plan for a proposed multi-species fish hatchery at Fort Peck, Montana under the Section 22 authority. For the study, the hatchery was sited on a 94-acre parcel of land downstream from Fort Peck Dam. In general, the study discussed (1) the need for and impacts of having a second warm-water fish hatchery in Montana; (2) the types and production numbers of fish proposed for propagation at the facility; (3) opportunities for raising endangered species, such as the pallid sturgeon; (4) a preliminary design and cost estimate for construction and operation and maintenance of a fish hatchery; (5) the availability of Corps land for the project; and (6) the availability of high-quality water and affordable power to operate the facility.

Through a collaborative effort, the Corps of Engineers and the Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks determined that a facility consisting of 54 rearing ponds (having a total of 49 surface acres of water) and a hatchery building approximately 22,000 square feet in size could be accommodated on the proposed site. This facility would provide a reliable and cost-effective means of producing the desired fish species to meet the needs of the State of Montana, including walleye, sauger, tiger muskie, northern pike, chinook salmon, largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, and catfish. The hatchery would also support the propagation of the endangered pallid sturgeon.

The study was completed on schedule. A summary report of the basic study findings was provided to the study sponsor in mid-March 2000, and the main report was provided at the end of March 2000. Total study costs were $250,000, with the State and the Corps each providing $125,000.

CONCLUSION

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my statement. We would be happy to answer any questions you may have. Thank you again for the opportunity to participate in this Senate Subcommittee hearing. We have enjoyed working with the State of Montana on this study.